

2022-2023 Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center Resident Bios

(PGY1 Residents)



Marissa Brakefield, PharmD

Hometown: Pegram, Tennessee

School of Pharmacy: Lipscomb University

Professional Areas of Interest: Pain & Palliative Care, Geriatrics

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? After completing my PGY-1 residency here at TVAMC, I am hoping to complete a PGY-2 in Pain & Palliative Care...or maybe Geriatrics, I'm still torn!

Hobbies: Creating art using artificial intelligence, listening to music and discovering new artists/subgenres, going to concerts, cooking, shopping secondhand.

What is your favorite part of living in Tuscaloosa? I don't actually live in Tuscaloosa, so I can't say for sure, but I sure do love the farmer's market! Tuscaloosa has so many nifty events and, coming from someone who grew up in Nashville with nearly 10x the population of Tuscaloosa, it's refreshingly un-crowded.

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? The people. I was very strategic in the programs I applied to, but when I interviewed at TVAMC, I just knew it was the place I wanted to be. During the resident panel, one of the residents before me had me laughing so hard I was crying. I have a very dry sense of humor, so I knew I could work well alongside the people at this program. Additionally, Dr. McIntire, the RPD, would use smiling emoticons in her emails; she was the only RPD I contacted who did this. I am a professional and I can certainly act professionally, but I like having a personality too and working with people who are not afraid to be themselves. As far as for my strategy, I was specifically looking for programs with opportunities in mental health, pain management, substance use disorders, and geriatrics and TVAMC has it all. I honestly could not have landed in a better program.



Amanda Holder, PharmD

Hometown: Gulf Breeze, Florida

School of Pharmacy: Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy

Professional Areas of Interest: Geriatrics, Primary Care, and Outpatient Mental Health

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? After completing my PGY-1 residency here at TVAMC, I plan to pursue a PGY-2 residency with a focus in one of my areas of interest: Geriatrics, Primary Care, and/or Outpatient Mental Health.

Hobbies: I love hiking, gardening, antiques/thrifting, and anything creative!

What is your favorite part of living in Tuscaloosa? My favorite part of Tuscaloosa is our Saturday farmer's market on the Black Warrior River! I love being able to see all the local vendors and enjoy a walk by the river.

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? I knew I wanted to complete my PGY-1 residency at TVAMC because of the emphasis on ambulatory care practice in a variety of areas, such as Primary Care and Outpatient Mental Health, as well as the opportunity to gain clinical experience in the Geriatric setting. Additionally, I was drawn to the supportive and caring community not only among the Pharmacy Department, but TVAMC as a whole.



Sahil Patel, PharmD

Hometown: Madison, Mississippi

School of Pharmacy: University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy

Professional Areas of Interest: Psychiatry, Ambulatory Care, Substance Use Disorder

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? After completing my PGY-1 residency, I hope to pursue a PGY-2 Psychiatric Residency. Long-term, my professional goal is to work as a Mental Health Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner within the VA system.

Hobbies: Sports, trying out new restaurants, hiking, spending quality time with friends and family

What is your favorite part of living in Tuscaloosa? My favorite part of living in Tuscaloosa is all the opportunities you have for outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, etc., while also enjoying the small-town feel that this town provides. Also, Tuscaloosa is within close

proximity of Birmingham. Therefore, if you cannot find any activity to do here, then you can just drive up to Birmingham and explore what the city has to offer.

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? The versatility that the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center provides in terms of opportunities to grow into a well-rounded clinical pharmacist academically, professionally, and personally after PGY-1 are immense. These opportunities include being part of an inter-professional team managing several disease states in Primary Care, Mental Health, and Geriatrics setting, precepting IPPE/APPE students, and learning about Pharmacy Management along with many other opportunities. Furthermore, from day one, you will feel supported by a team that wants to see you succeed and accomplish your goals.



Robert Tooma, PharmD

Hometown: Fort Walton Beach, Florida

School of Pharmacy: Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy

Professional Areas of Interest: Anticoagulation, Ambulatory Care, Opioid Stewardship, and Emergency Medicine

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? After my PGY-1 residency at TVAMC, I plan to complete a PGY-2 in either Ambulatory Care or Emergency Medicine. My current long-term goal is to become a clinical pharmacist while also helping advance the profession of pharmacy through various avenues such as academia and precepting.

Hobbies: Sports (especially football and basketball), hiking with my dog Simba, and cooking/baking

What is your favorite part of living of Tuscaloosa? Tuscaloosa is a great and unique place because it incorporates both the college town vibes as well as having various outdoor activities that you can enjoy. So far, one of my favorite events that I have been to is Live at the Plaza, because it is a great place to enjoy time with friends/family while also listening to local live music.

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center provides you with multiple opportunities to practice at the top of your pharmacy license while also being able to connect/care for our veterans. This is specifically seen within the culture here because everyone is focused on providing the highest level of care to our veterans through collaborative practice, as well as helping mold/train well-rounded practitioners.



Alivia Price, PharmD (PGY1 Completed at TVAMC)

Hometown: Jasper, Alabama

School of Pharmacy: Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy

Professional Areas of Interest: Mental Health, Geriatrics, Primary Care, Academia

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? My professional goals are to become board-certified and work as a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in the Tuscaloosa area! I would also like to continue involvement with student/resident education, local and regional professional organizations, and mentorship.

Hobbies: I am a huge foodie! I love trying local restaurants, and I enjoy making (and eating) charcuterie boards. My other hobbies include spending time outdoors with my husband and our two dogs, Bella and Fisher. We love to go camping, hiking, or just out on the town for lunch

at a dog-friendly restaurant! Our favorite kind of Saturday morning in Tuscaloosa starts with a trip to the local farmers' markets, then Heritage House for brunch (the breakfast burrito is a must-try), and ending with a walk at one of the local parks!

What is your favorite part of living of Tuscaloosa? We have lived in Tuscaloosa for 1 year, and my favorite part of Tuscaloosa is the small-town feel without being in a small town! I have made so many great friends here by being a part of the residency program and getting involved in the community. You'll find such close-knit groups of people in Tuscaloosa, while also being able to enjoy the perks of being in a thriving town. For instance, you'll commonly see the TVAMC group at Trivia Night, Bingo, or yoga class!

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center gives me the opportunity to be a vital member of a multidisciplinary healthcare team, while working alongside like-minded professionals who also have a passion for serving the ones who have served our country. Each day, I am able to grow academically, professionally, and personally by caring for complex patients, working interprofessionally, and aiding in the education of student pharmacists. As a PGY-2 Psychiatric Pharmacy Resident, I have had the opportunity to participate in multidisciplinary rounds, assist one of our neurologists in his specialty clinic, and help precept our PGY-1 residents. Each day, there are veterans who need our care and attention, so there is always something new to learn!



Raymond Cruz Tidwell, PharmD (PGY1 Completed at TVAMC)

Hometown: Jasper, Alabama

School of Pharmacy: Samford University's McWhorter School of Pharmacy

Professional Areas of Interest: My current area of interest within the pharmacy profession is Mental Health. Specifically, within Mental Health, I am interested in PTSD and Serious Mental Illness.

What do you want to do professionally after completing this residency? After completion of my current PGY-2 in mental health, I hope to stay within the VA system and work either in a Residential Rehab Treatment Program (RRTP) or possibly in an Acute Psychiatric unit.

Hobbies My hobbies include playing basketball with friends, hiking, watching Harry Potter, and going to yard-sales.

What is your favorite part of living of Tuscaloosa? My favorite part about living in Tuscaloosa is being so close to Bryant Denny Stadium. I have been an Alabama fan my entire life and have really enjoyed having opportunities to see the Crimson Tide play in person.

Why Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center? The Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center has various opportunities to explore whether it is Primary Care, Geriatrics, or Mental Health. As a resident, you will feel like an integral part of the team from the first day and will have a strong support group around you to accomplish your goals.